

INTERESTING EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF MIDWAY RELATED
BY HENRY VAN WAGONER, A PIONEER OF MIDWAY, TO,
DOROTHY HOLMES ON FEB. 22, 1933.

In about the year 1860 the first settlers came to this valley. John H. Van Wagoner came from Provo and settled in the Lower Settlement in the 1860's. He came from New Jersey and settled in Provo in 1852. He built the first Grist Mill in this valley in 1861 in the Lower Settlement. It stood where Fred Price's house now stands on Snake Creek. It was called the Wood's Farm then. At this time the following families were living in the Lower Settlement: David Wood, Oscar Wood, Bill Wood, Jesse McCarrell, Joseph McCarrell, David Van Wagoner, James and David Provost, Joseph Murdock, Mark Smith, Sidney H. Epperson, Jeremiah Robey, John Watkins, George Wardle (came to Salt Lake in 1847 with the first pioneers), Herbert Orsler, Fred and Stephen Bee, Andrew Hamilton, Isaac Bowman, Attewall Wootton, Simon Hickinbottom, Thomas Perry, the Bronsons, and perhaps others.

The Upper Settlement was located at the mouth of Snake Creek Canyon. The early settlers came there about the same time (1860). The first sawmill in this valley was built by Peter Shirts on Snake Creek at the mouth of the canyon. It contained an old up and down saw. It was later purchased and operated by Henry Coleman, Sr. John H. Van Wagoner worked in it for some time.

The first families of the Upper Settlement were: George Bonner, Peter Shirts, David Van Wagoner, who built a shingle mill at the mouth of the canyon and operated it for some time. It was located about where the power plant now stands. John Huber and David Provost ran the shingle mill. John Huber took up land there and after the move to Midway his family moved back up and have lived there ever since. In about the year 1865 a company of United States soldiers camped in what is now known as Soldier Hollow. It was named because of the camp.

In 1866 the people received instructions from Pres. Brigham Young to move together into larger settlements for protection against the Indians. The two settlements moved to what is now our public square and built a fort. The houses were built one right next to the other all around the square. The space in the center was used for the cattle at night. The cattle were kept in one big herd and were driven to the mountains to feed in the daytime by men and boys who guarded them. They were brought back at night and guarded within the square. The people in Midway were not bothered very much by Indians. They lost a few horses, but they had no trouble to speak of.

In 1868 the crickets came and completely destroyed all of the crops. There was no harvest that year and the people had a very hard time to get food. The next year the crickets came again and the seagulls came and devoured them. The seagulls would fill up on crickets, then go and drink water and vomit the crickets into the stream and then return to the fields for more. They kept this up for days until the crickets were done away with. The Indians caught the crickets and mashed their heads, dried them and made soup out of them. Simon Schneitter, during the grasshopper time when there was very little harvest, went up Snake Creek and cut the mountain grass with a scythe and hauled it down on a two-wheeled cart with a drag rack to feed to his cattle during the winter.

Between 1880 and 1885 John Watkins built a sawmill on what is now called the Mill Flat at the Snake Creek Tunnel. This furnished employment for many young men. Some of the loggers were: Orson Lance, James W. Provost, William Van Wagoner, Henry Van Wagoner, David W. Provost, Milo Lance, Henry Watkins, Edward Watkins, Casper Sulser, Charles I. Bronson, William Bonner, George Bunnell, James Gur, Adam Empey, John Sulser, Everus Bronson, Peter Alplanalp, Christian Burgener. This logging was all done with ox teams.

The pioneers had to clear the land and kill the snakes. The Snake Den, up by Zwiefels' place, was literally lined with rattlesnakes. The men would take a little pole with a hook in the end and pull the snake out by the head, then kill it and cut a slit down its back and take the oil out. The oil was very valuable. It was put in small bottles and used as a rubbing oil to cure earache, croup, stiff joints, etc.

The houses were all built of logs until after the sawmill was built, then they started making frame houses. The furniture was all slab furniture except what some of the pioneers brought with them from the East. Mr. and Mrs. John H. Van Wagoner brought a set of chairs with them from New Jersey.

The pioneers heated their homes and cooked with a sagebrush fire in a fireplace. In front of the fireplace was a bake oven which was used for baking bread, etc. The other cooking was done over the open fireplace in kettles and griddles hung over the open fire.

Some of the homes had wooden floors and others had just dirt floors. Most of them had dirt roofs. Sometimes the rain would leak through until they had to put pans on the beds to catch the mud and water. The beds were built in the wall with three logs

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across the room. Some of the members of the family would sleep on the top and another bed was made underneath for others. Most of the beds were equipped with straw ticks. The homes contained just one room to house big families.

Food was very scarce at times. Potatoes and bread made up the principal diet. They would sometimes gather garlic and make garlic soup. Game was plentiful but weapons were scarce. There were lots of fish and the boys caught them with a string and a pin hook. They could sometimes kill wild chickens with rocks.

Some people had to tell time by the sun because they had no clocks. They didn't have matches. They had to make their fires with a flint rock. Their homes were all lighted with candles or a light made by putting a rag in a pan of grease and lighting it. Some of the children had to go to school barefooted.

The first school house in Midway was a log building which stood just west of the spot now occupied by the Second Ward LDS Chapel. School was held there for two or three years with Simon Hickenbottom as teacher. The seats were made of slabs with peg legs. The children when they became thirsty had to go outside and lie down by the ditch to drink. The books they used were the Wilson Readers. They wrote on slates. The next school was the Post Office building. The school was used for dances, meetings, and all public gatherings. Attewall Wootton, Sr., was the teacher. Mrs. Sarah Woods, C. I. Bronson's aunt, taught summer school in what is now the grainery on the place of William Van Wagoner, Sr.

Sidney H. Epperson was the first bishop of the Midway Ward. Alvah Alexander was the next, David Van Wagoner the next, John Watkins the next, and Jacob Probst next after the wards divided. (Jacob Probst is still bishop of the second ward).

The first store in Midway was built by David Van Wagoner. It stood just west of where Guy Coleman's house now stands. It was a little frame building. Before this time all of the provisions were hauled by ox teams and a few horse teams from Heber, Provo, and Salt Lake. The first blacksmith shop was owned and operated by John Davis. It was located in the public square just west of where the Second Ward Chapel now stands.

The German Hall was built about 1875. It was built for a dance hall and music house by a company of men consisting of Andrew Burgener, Christian Burgener, Peter Alp-lanalp, and others. Andrew Burgener was one of the best musicians in the state at that time. The first band organized here was a marshall band. The members of this band were: Mark Smith, Jesse McCarrell, Sr., Jesse McCarrell, Jr., Joseph Jacobs, and David Provost. The next band was the German Band organized by Andrew Burgener.

In about 1888 David Van Wagoner built the Van Wagoner Hall which stood between the places now occupied by the homes of David Van Wagoner, Jr. and Clark Bronson. It was built and used for an amusement hall for many years.

The many canyons in our mountains were named by our pioneers. Pole Canyon up above the cemetery was so named because of the poles that were taken out of there by the pioneers. Just north of that is Sid's Canyon, named after Sidney H. Epperson, the first man to haul wood out of there. Indian Spring west of the cemetery was so named because an Indian died and was buried there many years ago. Lime Canyon was so named because the first lime was burned there by Allen Martin. Lime Canyon is just west of Schneitter's Resort. Snake Creek was so named because of the great many snakes. The Twist, called Jacob's Twist, was so named because Mr. Jacob was the first to haul wood from there.

Dr. Gerber had a ranch in the Upper Settlement. He was the first doctor to settle in this valley. He came in about 1862 from Switzerland. Pine Canyon and Mahogany Ridge are so named because of the kind of wood growing there.

The pioneers had their own forms of amusement. They held public dances in which they enjoyed dancing the quadrilles and other round dances which we call old time dances. They also went to lectures delivered twice a week by a Professor Clegg, an English Phrenologist who settled in Heber. The twenty-fourth of July was always celebrated with a parade of the Marshall Band around the public square.

Some other school teachers that were not mentioned above were: Mr. Forbes from American Fork, Mr. Nugent from up the river, and Mr. Felps, a Civil War veteran who had been wounded five times.

These items are very interesting and were taken from the mouth of a real pioneer. Mr. Van Wagoner told these from his actual experience. He was born May 22, 1861, and died July 27, 1933, after living in Midway for 70 years.

MIDWAY--

Sidney H. Epperson presided in the new Midway settlement at the beginning. He was succeeded in 1870 by Henry S. Alexander, who presided until 1877, when the Midway Branch was organized as a regular bishop's ward with David Van Wagoner as Bishop. He was succeeded in 1892 by John Watkins, who died Dec. 23, 1902, after which Alvin J. Alexander took temporary charge of the ward until Feb. 8, 1903, when Midway was divided into two wards, namely, the Midway 1st and the Midway 2nd wards.

MIDWAY 1ST WARD, Wasatch Stake, Wasatch Co., Utah, consists of Latter-day Saints residing in the east part of Midway, the street running north and south, east of the public square, being the boundary line between the two wards.

The Midway Ward was divided into two wards Feb. 8, 1903, namely, the Midway 1st Ward with Joseph W. Francom as Bishop, and the Midway 2nd Ward. Brother Francom was succeeded in 1906 by Henry T. Coleman, who in 1913 was succeeded by John Van Wagoner, jun., who in 1926 was

succeeded by Clark Bronson, who presided Dec. 31, 1930. On that date the Midway First Ward had 450 members, including 102 children.

MIDWAY 2ND WARD, Wasatch Stake, Wasatch Co., Utah, consists of the Latter-day Saints residing in the west part of the town of Midway, being separated from the Midway 1st Ward by the street running north and south, east of the public square.

Jacob Probst was chosen as Bishop of the Midway 2nd Ward on Feb. 8, 1903, when the Midway Ward was divided into two wards. He presided Dec. 31, 1930, on which date the Midway 2nd Ward had 372 members, including 50 children.

When Midway was divided in 1903, the old meeting house, valued at \$2,000, remained in the 2nd Ward, and is still used by the saints of that ward as a house of worship. The saints of the 2nd Ward assisted those of the 1st Ward in erecting a new meeting house elsewhere.

CHARLESTON WARD, Wasatch Stake, Wasatch Co., Utah, consists of the Latter-day Saints residing in the village of Charleston, and those living in a scattered condition in its immediate neighborhood. The village of Charleston is situated on a level tract in Provo Valley near the left bank of the Provo River, five miles southwest of Heber City, and three miles south of Midway, on the opposite side of the river.

In 1858 a trapper by the name of Aaron Daniels located on the Provo River at the point where the channel of Daniels Creek empties into that river, about one mile north of the center of Charleston. He spent most of the winter of 1858-1859 trapping in Provo Valley, but went away in 1859. That year, however, George Noakes and others from Utah Valley took up land claims near the present site of Charleston and put in some small grain which, however, was killed by the frosts.

William Manning built the first house in that part of Provo Valley now included in the Charleston Ward and wintered stock on his ranch during the winter of 1859-1860. Noakes and Manning were the only settlers in Charleston until 1863 when other settlers moved in. There were about a dozen families there in 1866. After that the settlement grew quite rapidly.

George Noakes was the first presiding Elder at Charleston, acting under the direction of Bishop Joseph S. Murdock of Heber City. He was succeeded about 1867 by John Watkins, who presided until July 15, 1877, when the Charleston Branch was organized as the Charleston Ward with Nymphus C. Murdock as Bishop. He was succeeded in 1901 by William Dabell, who was succeeded in 1904 by John M. Ritchie, who presided Dec. 31, 1930. On that date the Charleston Ward had 397 members, including 88 children. The total population of the Charleston Precinct in 1930 was 467; of these 343 resided in the town of Charleston.

*— From Ruby M. Provost
Scrapbook*

HEBER CITY is the principal town in Wasatch County, Utah, of which it is the county seat, and also the headquarters of the Wasatch Stake. Heber City is centrally located in Provo Valley, about 1½ mile east of Provo River, 26 miles northeast of Provo, Utah Co., and 45 miles by nearest road by way of Park City, southeast of Salt Lake City. Heber City is a regularly surveyed town, each block of the survey containing four lots. The streets are five rods wide, with the exception of Main Street, running through the town from north to south, which is 7½ rods wide. Heber City is an incorporated town and can boast of three fine modern L. D. S. chapels, besides the stake tabernacle, a substantial rock building erected in 1885-1889. Heber City is divided ecclesiastically into three bishop's wards, viz., Heber 1st, Heber 2nd, and Heber 3rd; these wards contained 2,207 members, including 450 children, Dec. 31, 1930. The total population of the Heber Precinct in 1930 was 2,762, of which 2,477 resided in Heber City.

Heber City was settled by Latter-day Saints in the spring of 1859 by Robert Broadhead, James Davis and James Gurr. They were followed by others the same year, and improvements were commenced immediately; hay was gathered and crops raised. The first house built in Provo Valley was one erected by John W. Witt, a building constructed of cottonwood logs which grew near the place where the Heber City grist mill now stands. About seventeen families spent the winter of

1859-1860 in Provo Valley. William Meeks presided in the valley by appointment at the beginning and the new settlement was placed under the jurisdiction of Bishop Silas Smith of Provo. William Meeks was succeeded as presiding Elder in 1860 by William W. Wall, who presided until Nov. 15, 1860, when Joseph S. Murdock was ordained a Bishop by Pres. Brigham Young and set apart to preside over the saints who had located above the toll-gate in the Provo Valley. Brother Murdock was succeeded in 1867 by Abram Hatch, who had general jurisdiction of all the saints in Provo Valley as presiding Bishop until July 15, 1877, when he was chosen as president of the Wasatch Stake of Zion, and Heber City was on that occasion divided into two wards, namely, the Heber East Ward and the Heber West Ward. These two wards existed side by side until Feb. 8, 1903, when Heber City was divided into three wards, namely, the Heber 1st, the Heber 2nd and the Heber 3rd wards. These three wards have had a continued existence ever since.

HEBER 1ST WARD, Wasatch Stake, Wasatch Co., Utah, consists of Latter-day Saints residing in the northeast part of Heber City, or that part which lies east of Main St. and north of 1st South St.

At a stake conference held February 8, 1903, the Heber East and the Heber West wards, which had existed since 1877, were disorganized, and Heber City divided into three new wards, named respectively the Heber 1st, 2nd, and 3rd wards. Robert S. Duke, the former Bishop of the Heber East Ward, was chosen as Bishop of the Heber 1st Ward. He presided until 1917, when he was succeeded by George F. Ryan, who in 1923 was succeeded by George B. Stanley, who on Sept. 7, 1930, was succeeded by Joseph Olpin, who presided Dec. 31, 1930. On that date the Heber 1st Ward had 628 members, including 109 children.

HEBER 2ND WARD, Wasatch Stake, Wasatch Co., Utah, consists of the Latter-day Saints residing in that part of Heber City lying west of Main St. and north of 2nd South St. Northward the ward extends to the Summit Stake and westward to the Provo River. A meeting house was built in the Heber 2nd Ward in 1915 at a cost of \$20,000.

Heber 2nd Ward was organized Feb. 8, 1903, with Joseph A. Rasband as Bishop. He presided until 1926, when he was succeeded by Henry Clay Cummings, who in 1928 was succeeded by Frederick G. Carlile, who presided Dec. 31, 1930. On that date the Heber 2nd Ward had 727 members, including 166 children.

HEBER 3RD WARD, Wasatch Stake, Wasatch Co., Utah, consists of the Latter-day Saints residing in that part of Heber City lying south of 1st South St. (east of Main St.) and south of 2nd South St. (west of Main St.). The ward meeting house, a modern brick building, stands on the east side of Main St. between 4th and 5th South streets.

Heber 3rd Ward dates back to Feb. 8, 1903, when Heber City was divided into three wards, namely, the Heber 1st, 2nd and 3rd wards. Frederick Crook was chosen as Bishop of the Heber 3rd Ward, and presided Dec. 31, 1930. On that date the Heber 3rd Ward had 852 members, including 175 children.

HEBER EAST WARD, Wasatch Stake, Wasatch Co., Utah, consisted of the Latter-day Saints residing east of Main St. It came into existence July 15, 1877, when Heber City was divided into two wards, namely, the Heber East and the Heber West wards, and Thomas Rasband was chosen as Bishop of the Heber East Ward. He died July 24, 1884, and was succeeded Nov. 2, 1884, by Robert S. Duke, who presided until Feb. 8, 1903, when Heber City was divided into three wards, namely, the Heber 1st, 2nd, and 3rd wards.

HEBER WEST WARD, Wasatch Stake, Wasatch Co., Utah, consisted of the Latter-day Saints residing west of Main St. and organized at a special conference held July 15, 1877, when Heber City was divided into two wards, namely, the Heber East and Heber West wards, with William Foreman as Bishop of the Heber West Ward. He was succeeded in 1884 by Henry Clegg, who in 1894 was succeeded by Thomas Hieber, jun., who presided until Feb. 8, 1903, when Heber City was divided into the Heber 1st, 2nd and 3rd wards.